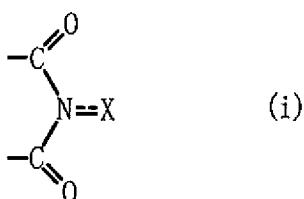


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid, by oxidizing an aromatic compound B with oxygen in the presence of a catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A to thereby yield a corresponding aromatic carboxylic acid,

the aromatic compound B having one or more hydrocarbon groups alone as substituents on its aromatic ring, and

the catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A having a skeleton represented by following Formula (i):



wherein X represents oxygen atom or an -OR group, and wherein R represents hydrogen atom or a hydroxyl-protecting group, as a constitutive member of its ring,

the method comprising the step of carrying out a reaction at:

a concentration of the aromatic compound B in the reaction system of 3.0 percent by weight or less;

a molar ratio of the catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A to the aromatic compound B in the reaction system of 0.01 or more;[and]

an oxygen concentration in an offgas of 1% to 8% with the oxygen to be fed to the reaction system being an oxygen-containing gas containing oxygen in an amount of 10% to 50%[,]; and

a pressure of oxygen to be fed to the reaction system being 0.1 MPa to 4 MPa,

while continuously feeding the catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A, the aromatic compound B, a reaction solvent, and oxygen to a reactor and continuously extracting a reaction mixture from the reactor.

2. (Cancelled)

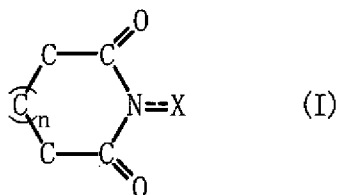
2 ~~3.~~ (Currently Amended) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein the reaction is carried out at a reaction temperature of 150°C or higher.

4. (Cancelled)

3 ~~5.~~ (Previously Presented) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out at a residence time of 0.5 to 4 hours.

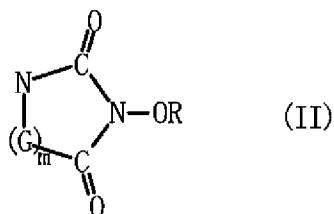
4 ~~6.~~ (Previously Presented) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is continuously carried out using plural reactors arranged in series at a concentration of the aromatic compound B in the reaction system at least in the downstreammost reactor of 3.0 percent by weight or less.

5 ~~7.~~ (Original) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim 1, wherein the catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A comprises a cyclic imide compound having a cyclic imide skeleton represented by following Formula (I):



wherein "n" denotes 0 or 1; and X represents oxygen atom or an -OR group, wherein R represents hydrogen atom or a hydroxyl-protecting group,

or a cyclic acylurea compound having a cyclic acylurea skeleton represented by following Formula (II):



wherein "m" denotes 1 or 2; G represents carbon atom or nitrogen atom, wherein when m is 2, two Gs may be the same as or different from each other; and R is as defined above.

8. (Cancelled)

⁷ ~~1.~~ (Currently Amended) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim ⁶ ~~[[8]] 11~~, wherein the metallic compound is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of cobalt compounds and manganese compounds.

10. (Cancelled)

⁶ ~~1.~~ (Previously Presented) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim 1, further comprising adding a metallic compound as a promoter.

⁸ ~~2.~~ (Currently Amended) The method for producing an aromatic carboxylic acid according to claim ⁶ ~~[[10]] 11~~, wherein the amount of the metallic compound is 0.001 to 10 moles per 1 mole of the catalytic nitrogen-containing cyclic compound A.